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THE

Commonweal

CHRISTIANITY AND CIVILIZATION

by Jean Danielou

THE AMERICAN WORKER

by Edward A. Marciniak

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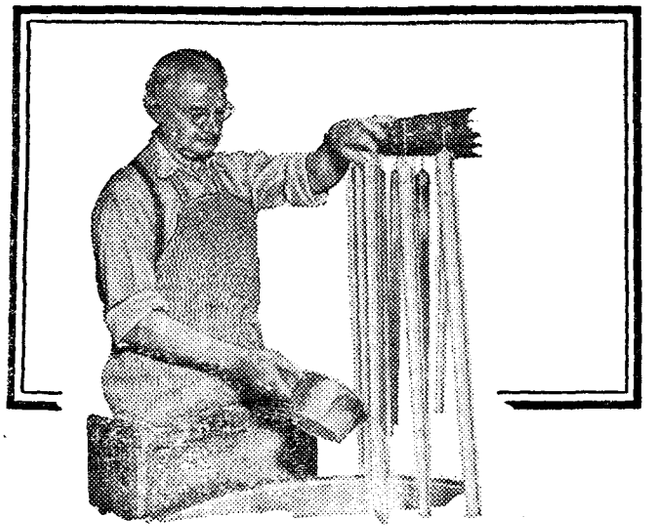

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THE
Commonweal
A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts
THIRTY-SECOND YEAR OF PUBLICATION

week by week

MR. STEVENSON AGAIN

THE DEMOCRATIC national convention did one thing: in a negative fashion, it provided the best possible setting for a candidate who clearly has the capacity to be a great American leader. After the speech by the keynoter, Governor Clement of Tennessee, for example, who could fail to appreciate the greatness of Adlai Stevenson?

In the form it took in Chicago, at least, the nominating convention seems destined to share the fate of the circus. Most of the rites and rituals displayed belong to another era, and they might well be left to the historian. Language itself becomes meaningless and self-defeating when, as at Chicago, hyperbole is the order of the day and calling a man "one of the great Americans" is almost an insult because this is the bare minimum that can be said about any member of the party. Possibly it is a disease which afflicts those out of power, but the Democrats in Chicago distinguished themselves by never saying what they had to say in two minutes when twenty minutes was available. For all the delegates cared, the simple declarative sentence might not have existed, and for sheer dullness few experiences could rival the reading of this year's uninspired and wordy platform. No doubt there are certain virtues in dramatizing the fact that the Democratic party has not been taken over by Robert Montgomery and the packagers from the ad agencies, but the Democrats overdid it.

Out of it all, however, in spite of everything, came candidate Adlai Stevenson. To our mind, it would have been unthinkable for the delegates to have nominated anyone else. For in him the Democrats have a leader of greater stature than many of them know. A sharp battle of semantics has raged around him for the past four years, and we are no more able than anyone else to pin a handy label on him. Is Adlai Stevenson a liberal conservative, a conservative liberal, a moderate progressive, a progressive moderate? The man defies cataloguing in such facile fashion, and this fact is an indication of his quality. In our mind, there is no doubt that Adlai Stevenson is a man of great intellectual and moral caliber, whatever label people pin on him, and, if he is elected, the vision of a "New America" he called for in his acceptance speech may well be the stuff of history.

WILL Adlai Stevenson be elected? The odds, no doubt, are against him. But he does have certain definite advantages he did not have in 1952. Intellectually, Adlai Stevenson was always his own man. Now he is completely on his own politically as well, thanks to Mr. Truman's abortive effort to block his nomination.

In 1952, Mr. Stevenson was bucking a widespread feeling that it was "time for a change"—a feeling he was himself reported to understand very well; this is no longer the case. In 1952, Governor Stevenson is said to have thought that Mr. Eisenhower would make a good President if he were elected; today he is convinced that Mr. Eisenhower has in fact been a popular but weak President in the caretaker tradition, and this conviction is bound to help his own campaigning.

Under our system of government, no man is qualified for the Presidency unless he possesses the capacity to generate enthusiasm and to inspire people to follow his leadership. Mr. Truman's tactics at the convention have tended to obscure the fact that Adlai Stevenson has in fact proven himself a tremendous vote-getter. His plurality when elected Governor of Illinois exceeded the half million mark, as compared with Mr. Truman's own victory in Illinois by just a few thousand

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votes. During the last campaign Mr. Stevenson showed great capacity to arouse admiration even among those who opposed him and great enthusiasm among those who supported him; only the distribution of electoral votes makes people forget that he amassed almost twenty-seven million votes against Mr. Eisenhower in 1952. In the light of history, for him to have won that many votes against a great and popular war hero, and under the circumstances of 1952, may well seem a major political accomplishment. Mr. Stevenson has what any good President must have, sound political instincts, and if one may judge by his decision to throw the race for the Vice Presidency open, that instinct has become more rather than less sure since 1952 —and, in this instance, has given him a running mate who is a proven vote-getter, especially in the rural areas which may well determine the outcome of this election.

All these factors should help Mr. Stevenson in 1956. Yet there is no doubt that the question of the President's health will overshadow all other issues. Mr. Eisenhower has had two grave illnesses during the last year. The serious voter is bound to ask himself whether Mr. Eisenhower can in fact carry the full load of the Presidency during the next four years. If the Republicans were running any regular Republican, whether Nixon, Stassen, Dewey, Bricker, Knowland, or whoever, against Adlai Stevenson, they would undoubtedly be running scared right now. As it is, they are banking on the President's personal popularity, and they remain supremely confident.

For our part, we think that a most serious national debate should be carried on about the direction of our domestic policies and about our national position in the worldwide struggle against Communism. In Chicago the Democrats nominated a man uniquely qualified to promote that reasoned and responsible debate. For that act, despite the nonsense that went with it, the nation owes them a debt.

NEXT WEEK

VICTOR C. FERKISS writes about the Presidency as a political institution.

"The Presidency has grown in prestige because in times of crisis people have turned to a Lincoln or a Franklin Roosevelt for a leadership Congress seemed unable to provide and, despite temporary cross-currents, this prestige has been cumulative."

TEEN-AGE VIOLENCE

WHEN present-day society is confronted by budding criminals there is still an inevitable tendency for the guardian of the law to despair of these young men and young women rather early. As he sees it, people are law-abiding or they are not; in the policeman's book there is but one way of dealing with such elements. When knifings, shootings and other acts of violence by members of teen-age gangs increase at an alarming rate, as they have in New York City in recent months, the prescription seems clear. Police Commissioner Kennedy put it this way: five thousand more patrolmen comprise "the best way to combat crime."

But while the thousands of men that are available in New York have been patrolling their beats in the pursuance of an essential task, certain agencies and individuals have been hard at work investigating and counteracting the deep-seated causes of juvenile gang warfare on the city streets and of criminal tendencies in the young generally. A number of these agencies have, in fact, been working in close collaboration with police authorities.

The two groups met head-on at the very height of the public concentration on the Democratic Convention in Chicago. Day after day the debate appeared important enough, however, to stay on the front page. For the Police Department found itself greatly at odds with the social and religious (Episcopalian) agencies that had arranged a temporary truce among the "Sportsmen," "Enchanters" and "Dragons," three feuding East Side gangs.

The Police Commissioner's views stemmed from his thesis that "you cannot compromise with evil." He feared "mediation" between gangs as an "appeasement" and recognition which would encourage these "storm troopers" in their ways. He felt that it was giving status in the community to youthful leaders in crime. And he resented the implication that such gangs should have some say as to the maintenance of law and order and personal safety in any city streets or districts. (One of the provisions of the agreement, on which social agencies acted as mediators, was that until September 4 no more than three members of any of these three clubs would appear together in the district claimed by either of the other two.)

Time and again "mediation" of this sort has proved successful in other American cities, as it has also worked in New York. Some of the most desperate juvenile gangs have transformed themselves into energetic groups of constructive citizens when they were shown the way. Greater police sur-

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veillance and stringent law enforcement are often essential in areas where crime is rampant and life is cheap, but unless at the same time enforcement is coordinated with far-seeing activities on the part of family, social and religious agencies, it will have little lasting effect. It is curious that Commissioner Kennedy should give expression to such sentiments less than a month before the publication by his department of what is promised to be a report on "the most extensive survey on juvenile delinquency ever made in the United States."

TOO MUCH GOLD

WEST GERMANY'S remarkable postwar recovery no longer provokes astonishment in other countries; it is an established and accepted fact. But the effects of such vigorous and sustained production for export are mounting, particularly in the neighboring countries of Europe. West Germany has developed its own "dollar gap." The Germans' problem, as it is in our own economic relations with so many countries, is how to achieve a less "favorable" trade balance with Britain, France and other debtor nations.

Those who contend that no radical measures are called for are banking on German rearmament. Many observers doubt, however, that arms imports will be extensive enough even to offset the expansive effect of rearmament on the German economy. There is some talk of grants from surplus to the underdeveloped countries along the American or Colombo pattern, but such a program has yet to be developed.

West German economists would be very content if such countries as Great Britain and France were to devalue their currencies still further. This would be risky for either one in their respective precarious financial states. A similar effect in encouraging German imports and discouraging purchases of German goods by these heavily indebted countries could be produced by revaluing the mark upward. In fact the possibility of such a move has already aggravated the situation by causing substantial foreign purchases of German marks. And the possibility of exporting German capital on any scale is precluded by the fact that Germans can secure an annual return of ten per cent on their investments in home enterprises. The lack of feasible remedies here seems to be one of the penalties for being too enterprising and too successful.

There are obvious differences between certain of these German perplexities and our own. But there is enough similarity for each of us to learn, if we will, from the other's experience.

ARTISTS AND PATRONS

THE ARTIST seems always to have had a rather difficult time in making any ends meet, but, fortunately, there have also been patrons willing to defray the cost of room and board, at least, so that the artist could forget, rather than forego, the satisfaction of present needs while he wrote, composed or painted for posterity.

Times—and patrons—have changed, however. Horace and Virgil had their Maecenas; Giotto and Michelangelo their Pope-patrons; and Alexander Pope had his Lord Bolingbroke. But in our day, artists—at least, painters—have found a corporate patron in the allegedly unaesthetic and practical ranks of big business.

Thus the International Nickel Company recently commissioned a leading artist to paint a series depicting its operations throughout the world. Ford Motors and Standard Oil of New Jersey commission original paintings for the covers of their company publications, and United Airlines yearly commissions a major artist to do landscapes for its spectacular calendar.

But a slight barrier still lies between the contemporary painter and the Eldorados of Dearborn, Michigan or Madison Avenue. According to Mr. E. S. Barrie, who has long served as a liaison man between painters and their corporate patrons, "ninety-eight per cent of the people as a whole, and of industry in particular, prefer traditional art." It is not hard to conjure up the vision of some future abstractionist who made it on his own, penning a letter to International Nickel or Ford Motors somewhat like that sent by Samuel Johnson to a patron who had earlier rejected, and then courted him after Johnson had become famous: "I hope it is no very cynical asperity not to confess obligation where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing to a patron that which Providence has enabled me to do for myself." That would make rich reading at a meeting of the board.

THE CHALLENGE OF NATIONALISM

HISTORY, always fecund in ironies, has prepared some particularly bitter ones for the West in the last two decades, and most of them

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are observable in the current crisis resulting from the Egyptian seizure of Suez.

Thus, President Nasser acted from a complex of motives, but most of them can be traced back to the surge of nationalism within his country—the desire of a nation for complete sovereignty at home, and power and prestige abroad. The dimensions and the dangers of this nationalism do not have to be spelled out by political savants and scholars; they are clear in President Nasser's impassioned cry, "The Suez Canal belongs to us . . . and it will be run by Egyptians! Egyptians! Egyptians!"

These words, no matter how frenzied their tone or impractical their content may seem to Western ears, struck a responsive chord among the emergent nations of Africa and Asia. For them, the voice of Colonel Nasser was the echo of Bandung, and it was welcomed.

The irony of this reaction of the African-Asian bloc against the West is that the colonial powers themselves had initiated and fostered the very feelings of nationalism which triggered the reaction. The spread of colonialism in the nineteenth century, although inextricably mixed with greed and corruption, was the very agency which was to make possible the liberation of the colonies in the twentieth century. At its best, which was frequent enough, colonialism developed native groups capable of professional and political leadership of their countries, and many of the "new" nations, like India, Indonesia and the Philippines, owe their existence and potential unity as nations to those very colonial regimes under which they had been formerly governed.

By another irony, the more liberal a colonial regime, often the more deep-rooted and bitter was the anti-colonialism which it produced. Anti-colonial leaders were educated in the schools of the colonial powers, which, by bringing the "natives" into contact with Christianity and civilization, placed the seeds of liberty in their minds. More recently, and on a larger scale, the declarations of the Atlantic Charter and the Four Freedoms, now a hazy memory to most Westerners, were, to the peoples of Asia and Africa, a plea and a promise which have not been forgotten. It is significant, for example, that Gamal Nasser has frequently declared in recent weeks that the West, notably the U.S. and Britain, has torn up the Atlantic Charter and returned to the days and the ways of its former "imperialism."

History, of course, shows Colonel Nasser wrong. Four Arab nations, including Egypt, have been given their independence between the first and second world wars. Since 1946, a score of nations in Asia and Africa have achieved freedom from colonial rule, and the people thus liberated within a generation constitute about thirty per cent of the world's population. Within that same period of time, while most of the colonies of Western Europe were gaining their freedom, most of the nations of Central and Eastern Europe were losing theirs to the Soviet Union.

It is, of course, a further irony that Russia, now the largest and most despotic colonial power in the world, has been able to appear to much of Asia and Africa as a champion in their struggle against the remnants of colonialism on those continents, and the West's counter-charge of Soviet colonialism has left the emergent nations unimpressed.

These various ironies which confront the West on the issues of colonialism and nationalism offer little comfort, but they do, perhaps, offer a clue as to what its attitudes and actions should be. The West should, first of all, recognize and welcome the fact that the "new nationalism" of Asia and Africa is a part of the West's heritage of freedom, and we should be neither surprised by it nor scornful of it. The West must also understand the varying types of neutralism which have appeared among the recently liberated countries of these continents. We cannot, by either badgering or bribery, force people into the Western orbit, not only because we respect the diversity and dignity of other civilizations, but also because we respect our own tradition of free allegiance and national dignity.

Again, the West cannot, on any occasion, act as though the Age of Kipling had returned; too many high-level statements made in France and Britain on the Suez crisis, for example, make the Egyptians sound like "lesser breeds without the law." And, lastly, the West must patiently remind itself that its confrontation with the new nationalism is different in every country, that there is no single or easy solution, and that we must stop oscillating between clichés as we have done too often in the recent past.

The Commonweal is extremely grateful to the many readers who recently extended their subscriptions a year ahead and thereby helped the magazine materially during the difficult summer months. Although unable to thank each person individually as we would like, we hope our friends will accept this as our very sincere thanks.

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Christianity and Civilization

"TO SPEAK OF CHRISTIAN CIVILIZATION IS NOT TO SPEAK OF A MYTH, NEITHER THE NOSTALGIC MYTH OF A NEW MIDDLE AGES, NOR THE DREAM OF A KINGDOM OF GOD ON EARTH."

JEAN DANIELOU

CHRISTIAN CIVILIZATION is an ambiguous entity. The term is susceptible to many interpretations, but it is not only a question of words. The ambiguity is in the thing itself, because Christian civilization exists within the boundaries of two worlds: on the one hand, that of the Church and its supernatural mission; on the other, that of the Earthly City and its properly human objectives. Christian civilization therefore implies an essentially transitory world, one that is no longer that of earthly cities with their heroes and their gods—and it is not yet that of the Heavenly City, the inhabitants of which are the saints of whom Christ is the head. And its belonging to the two cities gives Christian existence its ambiguous character.

But there is another order of problems and another sort of ambiguity. They stem from the too-frequent practice of identifying as Christian civilization a particular form of Christian civilization, and hence of binding Christianity to any specific type of civilization. That is the most acute element in the present crisis. It is no longer a question of the ambiguity between the essence of Christianity and Christian civilization; nor is it a matter here of the Christian and non-Christian elements in the civilization which historically has been called Christian; it is rather a question of Christian civilization and various civilizations.

For if we speak of Christian civilization in the sense of certain values or certain essential claims of Christianity, it is still true that these values can find expression in various types of civilizations. Yet the temptation here is always to identify as Christian civilization the form of Christian civilization to which one is accustomed—and to believe that Christian civilization itself is in peril when one of its forms is in its death throes. And that is one way of describing the present crisis, the crisis of yesterday's Christian civilization and the danger there would be in identifying it with Christian civilization as such.

This is not today's problem. When bourgeois civilization first appeared, many Christians then—there are still some of them who do now—regarded it as a threat to that medieval civilization which they held to be identical with Christian civilization. The merit of the great apostles of the sixteenth century was to realize that the Church should not be bound to the Middle Ages, and that bourgeois civilization had to be evangelized. They were more or less successful; perhaps they did not do badly, considering what the medieval Christians had neglected to do.

Today we are once more at a crisis of civilization. It is difficult to define it exactly, but it presents certain traits: technical expansion, the primacy of problems of organization over problems of growth, the gradual substitution of cooperation for straight wages and of service for profit. In many respects this civilization meets certain demands of the Christian conscience which the mercantile civilization did not. In other ways it contains even greater dangers. A specific civilization is inevitably a *modus vivendi* which is always temporary and always ambiguous. But the danger here would be to attempt to identify Christianity with bourgeois civilization, as had been attempted with medieval civilization. Our task today is to make this new world conformable to the exigencies of Christianity—but without illusions, for this form of civilization is weighted down with dangers. Yet we do not turn from it, since the mercantile civilization which preceded it involved quite as many dangers.

AN ANALOGOUS problem is posed by the identification of Christian with Western civilization. One of the key happenings in the present-day world, doubtless the one that stands out above all others, is the arriving at economic and political manhood of many peoples who up to now have been under the political and economic tutelage of the West. This is not the place to go into the controversial aspects of this question. Clearly the emancipation of these peoples must be gradual. But it is also plain that there can be no turning back, and that the world of tomorrow has to be envisioned along such lines.

That confronts Christianity with a tremendous prob-

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lem. We are rudely aware that up to now only Western civilization has been evangelized. Of course there are Christians in all parts of the world. But Christianity in fact coincides with the sphere of influence of the Occident. It has spread with colonization. Hence whatever there is in Christianity that is linked with colonialism is affected by the crisis confronting colonial regions today. Inversely, at the moment the colonial peoples are liberating themselves from the West, we perceive that Christianity has not taken root in their culture, that it has not become a part of their patrimony. It is impossible to narrate the history of the West without speaking of such figures as Augustine, Basil, Dante and Shakespeare. But it is possible to unfold the whole history of Indian philosophy or of Chinese literature without coming upon a single Christian name.

Therefore, to any historian who examines things from without, Christianity can well appear to be the religion of the West. But that is untrue in every way. It is, first of all, false historically. For we must not forget that Christianity was born in a Semitic world and that its first and most serious crisis—which most resembles the present crisis—was the one it faced in passing from the Semitic world to the Graeco-Roman world (this is evidenced by the dramatic climate of the Epistles of Saint Paul). Indeed the most recent historians have shown that the Christians such as Paul who sought to pass over to the Greeks—as those of the fifth century would seek to pass over to the barbarians—were considered traitors to the Jewish culture and the Jewish fatherland.

It is also untrue theologically to characterize Christianity as the religion of the West. Christianity is not simply one of many religions, that is to say, the particular way in which a civilization such as ours represents God to itself and sets forth the avenues of approaching Him. On this basis our religion, the religion of the Mediterranean West, would be the ancient paganism of Sophocles and Virgil to which we readily return when Christianity is abandoned. But Christianity is an historical reality which interests men of every religion. And the only difference between us of the West and the pagans of the Far East or Africa is that we have been confronted with this reality earlier than they have, and that a certain number of us have believed in it.

Hence it is that in our time the Christianization of the non-Western peoples is posed so acutely. What makes this such a challenge to us is that the native Christians who could best accomplish this task comprise such tiny minorities. And, besides, the difficulties are immense. When we consider that it took thirteen centuries to Christianize the Graeco-Latin world and acknowledge the infinitely delicate problems involved simply in transmitting Revelation from one linguistic medium to another, we can see that these are tasks requiring centuries to complete.

But it remains true that this affirmation of the freedom of Christianity from identification with any specific civilization conveys the very essence of its catholicity. Insofar as civilizations are creatures like all others, they stand in need of being redeemed and transfigured. They comprise the various countenances of the humanity created in the image and likeness of God. And the liturgy will be perfected only when the Blessed Trinity is praised in every human tongue. In its refraction through the prism of the various human cultures the unique message of the Gospels manifests many aspects. And it is possible that, for the manifestation of Christ in His fullness, a theology, a liturgy, a mystique that is all-embracing would require this manifestation to be made by every culture.

THE FALSE identification of Christianity with the West also points to the need for evangelization. I have said that this is not Christian civilization. But there is a conditioning of Christianity by civilizations. In order that Christianity be rooted in a people, it is not enough for institutions of the Church to be set up among them; Christianity must also be integrated into the national life; it must not appear as an importation—nor express itself in foreign terms. The services which a Vietnamese, Arab, or African Christian performs for his country are the surest guarantee of the continued presence of Christianity in Vietnam, Syria and the Cameroons. And that is how we Christians, if we place the interests of the Kingdom of God above all else, will become capable of understanding all things. If the Christians of Africa fail to take responsibility for the interests of their country, liberation, which is inevitable, will also be hostile to the Church.

When we declare that Christianity is not bound to Western civilization we must not forget three things. The first is that in its twenty centuries Christianity borrowed the formulas of its dogmas and the forms of its liturgy in such a way that it would be impossible to know Christianity without knowing its Western expression. To reject such riches would reflect an absurd xenophobia. It will always be necessary to know Latin, in order to go back to the sources of Christianity. But this movement must never be unilateral; we must also learn to receive and not only to give.

The second point to remember is that in what we call Western Christian civilization there are elements which are specifically Western, but there are other elements which are simply human and which, although attained in the Occident, are for all mankind. There are diverse civilizations but there is also a functioning unity in the spirit and nature of man. There are certain

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metaphysical truths acquired only in the light of Revelation. There is a certain sense of the dignity of man that we have acquired only because man has been redeemed by the blood of Christ. There is a certain spiritual freedom which we have understood only in the light of an eternal vocation. These values are what might be said to constitute Christian civilization in a pure state. And they deserve to be defended.

Finally, it remains to be determined whether the question I have posed is not really a false question, one already outmoded by events. In his history of civilizations, Toynbee shows that of the twenty-five civilizations man has known, more than half have already disappeared—among them the Sumerian, Hittite, Aegean, Etruscan, Aztec and Inca civilizations. The question is, then, whether Oriental civilization may not be passé, if we are not already proceeding toward the unification of the world by technical civilization. Surely if we take a young Chinese, a young native of India, a young Arab, their one desire is to acquire the technical civilization of the West in order to raise their countries to the level of the Western countries.

In other words, is not the man whom we encounter everywhere in the world the man of a technical civilization? This technical civilization in the form imparted to it by Marxism is in the process of conquering a large part of the world. But we have not yet found the means of making it enter into Christianity. We have not yet Christianized technical civilization at home. How, then, can we Christianize it for others? But it is here that the universal significance of the experience of the West regains its value and that our task becomes plain. For if we encounter the Marxist West throughout the surface of the globe, it also means that the response which the Christian West makes in order to oppose it can benefit all humanity.

CHRISTIAN CIVILIZATION is our drama, that of our remorse and our responsibilities. Remorse because Christianity has not accomplished all that men have had the right to expect of it, because of the failures of Christians. But it is hardly enough to berate the Christian world for not having been Christian enough. We must still face our responsibilities. To speak of Christian civilization is not to speak of a myth, neither the nostalgic myth of a new Middle Ages nor the dream of a Kingdom of God on earth. It is necessary to demystify the concept of Christian civilization in order to restore its hard reality. The only myth to which we Christians have title is not a myth; it is the reality of the Heavenly Kingdom. That is where we shall be able to rest from our labors. But Christian civilization is the expression of our Christian duty in the face of the sufferings, errors, problems of the Earthly City in which we are consigned to live as Christians. The Kingdom of God is our love, but Christian civilization is our duty.

WITHOUT CLASS STRUGGLE

The American Worker

EDWARD A. MARCINIAK

IN ALMOST every industrialized nation of the world, on both sides of the Iron Curtain, the official workers' holiday is the first day of May. But in the United States May Day is celebrated only by Communists and a small remainder of nostalgic Socialists, while most American workers instead celebrate Labor Day, the first Monday in September.

This choice of a September holiday symbolizes the way in which U.S. workingmen and their leaders have moved from European working-class traditions and accommodated themselves to the U.S. political and economic system. The day itself was not selected for ideological or revolutionary objectives but for highly pragmatic benefits. In choosing Monday, for example, they made certain that a regular working day would be included in a three-day holiday weekend, and by picking September they guaranteed themselves an extra day of rest midway between two holidays which had been long established, the fourth of July and Thanksgiving.

While it is dangerous to generalize about workers in a nation as large and varied as the United States, it can be said that any analysis of the American economic system will be inadequate and distorted if it is predicated on the presence of a class struggle. Few factory workers in the U.S. show any desire to carry on a class war. The impact of movies, radio, press and magazines, advertising, and television upon a worker's attitudes has been immeasurably greater than that of his position

Mr. Marciniak is the editor of *Work*, published by the Catholic Labor Alliance, and one of the directors of the Chicago Council Against Racial and Religious Discrimination.

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as a worker. The country's natural wealth and high productivity; the absence generally of proletarian conditions; public education; the continual influx into cities of new immigrants and migrant workers to take over the menial jobs—all have tended to dull the class consciousness of factory workers. It is certainly true that there are millions of low-paid workers, that working and living conditions among most migratory workers are sub-human, and that certain racial groups are deprived of equal economic opportunity. But millions of factory workers who own their own homes regard themselves as "middle class." In addition, the most rapidly growing group in the working population is made up of white collar employees in offices, commerce, retail establishments, government service and the professions. By and large, the aspirations and standards of this white collar population, which almost outnumbers manual workers, are indistinguishable from those of the U.S. middle class.

Similarly, the labor movement in the U.S. functions without any religious commitment, unlike the Christian trade unions on the European and African continents, and without any special political allegiance such as that of the Socialist unions of Belgium, the defunct Peronist syndicates of Argentina, or the Communist labor movement in Italy. This neutral character of U.S. unions is not an historical accident; it was designed deliberately to fit North American conditions.

When the American Federation of Labor was founded in 1881, it was by no means certain that the new federation would follow a course plotted by non-Marxists. The opening sentence of its constitution dedicated the AFL to the class struggle: "A struggle is going on in all of the nations of the civilized world, between the oppressors and the oppressed of all countries, a struggle between capitalist and the laborer, which grows in intensity from year to year, and will work disastrous results to the toiling millions, if they are not combined for mutual protection and benefit." This preamble remained part of the AFL constitution until 1955 when its merger with the Congress of Industrial Organizations brought forth a new declaration.

THE NEW preamble crystallizes the metamorphosis in U.S. unionism in the years since 1881. Nowhere in the new AFL-CIO constitution is there any ringing call to join the class struggle. On the contrary, the preamble strikes a new tone: "At the collective bargaining table, in the community, in the exercise of rights and responsibilities of citizenship, we shall responsibly serve the interests of all the American people.

"We pledge ourselves to the more effective organization of working men and women; to the securing to them of full recognition and enjoyment of the rights to which they are justly entitled; to the achievement of ever higher standards of living and working conditions, to the attainment of security for all the people; to the enjoyment of the leisure which their skills make possible; and to the strengthening and extension of our way of life and the fundamental freedoms which are the basis of our democratic society.

"We shall combat resolutely the forces which seek to undermine the democratic institutions of our nation and to enslave the human soul. We shall strive always to win full respect for the dignity of the human individual whom our unions serve. With Divine guidance, grateful for the fine traditions of our past, confident of meeting the challenge of the future, we proclaim this constitution."

As a matter of fact, the class-conscious language of the old AFL constitution had been an anachronism since 1900. The swing from a concept of politically subordinate, Marxist-oriented unionism to a pragmatic, bread-and-butter unionism was almost entirely accomplished under the leadership of Samuel Gompers, chief architect of the AFL between 1881 and 1924 and its president for most of those years. Although an immigrant whose upbringing had been partial to European notions of Socialist unionism, Gompers soon learned how little U. S. labor parties and utopian unions had been able to accomplish for workingmen. As a result, he resolutely steered the American Federation of Labor toward policies which would be effective under American conditions and would actually improve the position of working people.

Fighting the doctrinaire theorists of the class struggle, who were more interested in erecting an American working class party than in building a labor movement, Gompers strove to preserve labor's freedom of action—from both the government and the political Marxists. His standard of good unionism was simple: would it bring *more* for the workers? He fought like a tiger against attempts by political cliques to dominate the AFL, but at the same time he urged unionists to become active in political campaigns. He had a great deal to do with Woodrow Wilson's victory in the 1912 election, a victory that gave the United States its first New Deal. When Gompers died in 1924, his legacy was a labor movement committed to business unionism.

The year that Gompers died, a young, American-born Socialist, Walter Reuther, was just starting to work. His Socialism had been handed down from his German-born grandfather. Thirty years later, in 1954, after the most turbulent years of U. S. labor history, Reuther, president both of the Congress of Industrial Organizations and of the United Auto Workers, a union with more than 1,250,000 members, declared: "A labor party would commit the American political system to the same narrow class structure upon which the political parties of Europe are built. I believe this very strongly. I believe there is great hope in America. I also

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believe that we have a society that is not rigid in character along class lines. And that is the great hope of America, that is the great hope of freedom everywhere, to keep our society and our social structure in a state of flux so that it doesn't become fixed, so it doesn't snap." Reuther's shift away from a Socialist unionism is an experience through which many U.S. union leaders have gone.

Another index of the labor movement's devotion to business unionism is the strictly pragmatic attitude that union leaders have taken towards nationalization. With few exceptions, union leaders have strenuously opposed public ownership of the basic industries because of their confidence in collective bargaining as *the basic way* to improve the wages, hours and working conditions of workers. Yet these same leaders, in their pragmatic fashion, have not opposed municipal ownership of electrical power, state ownership of the distribution of alcoholic liquor, and federal corporations to harness the waterpower of U. S. rivers.

Proud of their business-like concern for immediate improvement in working conditions, union officials claim, with some justification, that the continued pressure upon management for higher wages and increased benefits tended to weed out inefficient and incompetent employers. They also claim that their acceptance of mechanization and technological advancement (but with some exceptions, as in the building and entertainment fields) was, in part, responsible for higher U. S. productivity. Certainly, this practical bent of mind made the labor movement a real stumbling-block for the Marxist Socialists at the turn of the twentieth century and for the Communists during the great depression of the 1930's. Today, most U. S. unionists continue to distrust the theorist, whether he be Socialist, Communist, or capitalist. They have in the main tasted the bountiful fruits of business unionism and will accept no substitutes.

YET THE transmutation from a class-conscious, Marxist union of European inspiration to a native, hard-headed allegiance to collective bargaining as the way to produce tangible, sizable benefits for workingmen is by no means final. The U. S. labor movement has yet to reach full maturity. In the last twenty years it has undergone tremendous growth—from four to seventeen million members. Most of these new union members, it is aptly said, are organized but not unionized. Union jurisdiction has yet to be extended to the great majority (65 per cent) of U. S. workingmen who remain potential members. Furthermore, the nation's 190 national unions, whose membership ranges from 1,000 to 1,500,000 members, differ radically in their militancy, their involvement in political affairs, their policy toward the colored races, and their concern for the welfare of people in other countries. However, postponement of the labor movement's age of maturity is chiefly attributable to two additional factors: its unfinished struggle to root out tyrannical practices in internal union affairs and its partial success in attaining some equitable status in external union relations.

First of all, the ascendancy of business unionism saw a toleration and, in some cases, actual support of violations of human dignity within the unions themselves. The capture by hoodlums of New York city's waterfront unions was public knowledge; so was the existence of father and son control—by fraud and force—on Long Island, in Chicago, and elsewhere; so was the frank admission of a Chicago business agent that his union's insurance brokers had contributed $42,000 to sponsor a girls' baseball team which was his personal property; so was the $1,400 fine levied against each of nine midwestern pipefitters whose only crime was that they asked some pointed questions about a union real estate deal; so was the lackadaisical attitude displayed by some influential leaders toward the organization of farm and migratory workers.

Some union officers behaved and talked like corporation tycoons. "I run the union just like a business. We deal in one commodity— labor," once explained Dave Beck, president of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, the second largest union in the United States. Others, refusing to admit in practice that a union was a democratic body, regarded the union as their private property. Some paid public relations men a fancy price to write their biographies—sprinkled with heroic adjectives and hyperbole.

In some craft unions, especially in the building trades, exclusion of Negroes is still the rule rather than the exception. Such unions have exhibited deplorable indifference to racial discrimination. In collusion with contractors and material suppliers, some building trades unions still dictate the use of certain building materials and antiquated methods. The leaders of a large factory local in one city eliminate rank and file opposition by persuading the employer to fire any rebels. And the employer, eager to keep his sub-standard contract with the union, is more than willing to oblige.

Such cases of tyranny under business unionism are not typical. Yet there are enough of them to make top

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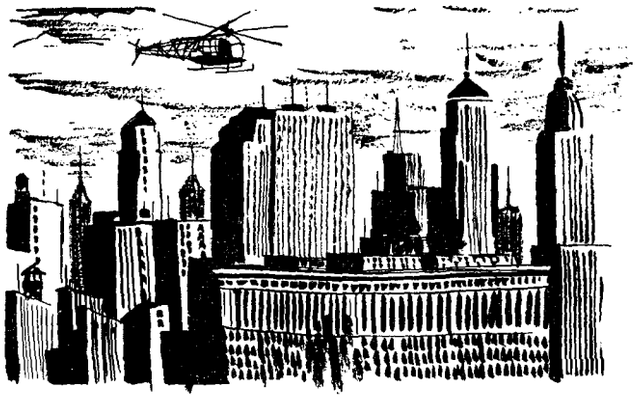

union leaders like George Meany, Al Hayes, and Walter Reuther anxious for reform and to create a distrust of the business unionism which has given shelter to such abuses.

Secondly, business unionism has not been able to secure labor's rightful place in American public affairs. For over nine years, unions have unsuccessfully been opposing the Taft-Hartley law, which imposes severe restrictions upon unions and collective bargaining. Early union demand for absolute repeal has now been replaced by a willingness to accept substantial amendments. Seventeen states have enacted "right to work" laws further restricting union activity—over the aggressive but unavailing protest of unions. State workmen's compensation benefits—in case of occupational disease or accident—are generally geared to living standards at a near starvation level. (Most state legislatures are still dominated by a coalition of middle class farmers and small businessmen.) Since 1953, despite the expenditure of considerable money and manpower for organizing the unorganized, the growth of union membership has reached an ominous plateau. Fifteen times as many businessmen as unionists sit in Congress. Only 84 labor leaders (out of approximately 50,000 full-time union officials in the U. S.) were regarded important enough to be included in a recent edition of *Who's Who in America.*

The political and economic strength of organized labor is repeatedly exaggerated to exploit fear and confusion for private gain. Most U. S. newspapers, for example, regularly attempt to magnify the real power of unions—implying that such power when held by workingmen and their leaders is somehow repugnant to democracy. Objections are constantly being raised to labor's exerting any important and decisive influence in national affairs—even if that power were to be democratically determined and directed toward the common good. Disappointed that the labor movement has been only partially successful in achieving greater political status and power in state capitals and in Washington, many union leaders are losing faith in the efficacy of business unionism.

THESE are the reasons, then, why the historical right of business unionism to set the standards for the American labor movement is being challenged by the union philosophies of "democratic unionism" and "political unionism." "Democratic unionism" concentrates on reordering a union's internal affairs and its relations with management. It strives militantly to eradicate the notion that labor is a commodity (by such measures as the guaranteed annual wage), to realize industrial democracy (by giving workingmen ownership and voice in industry), and by recognizing the justice of each worker's claim to human dignity (by eliminating all discrimination and segregation on account of race or color and by protecting the rights of union members against any despotism by some union boss). It regards political action by unions as necessary to guarantee the presence of a government friendly to such goals; political action stems not from some doctrinaire objective but from economic and moral necessity. Democratic unionism is sparked by some of that spirit which set aflame the native radicalism of the Knights of Labor in the 1870's and the Industrial Workers of the World in the 1910's: *an injury to one is an injury to all.* That is why its supporters, like the late Philip Murray, fought attempts of Communists and reactionaries to isolate the U. S. from the world and instead supported the Marshall Plan for Europe, technical assistance to underdeveloped countries, freedom for colonial people, and a sturdy United Nations.

Most advocates of "political unionism" would subscribe to these stated objectives of "democratic unionism," but would part company by attaching *prime* importance to labor's role in politics. In many ways, today's political unionists are legatees of those who fought against Samuel Gompers fifty years ago. They would tend to overstress the social benefits of government action and underemphasize the potency of collective bargaining. They would regard the union primarily as a stepping stone to labor's control of political life rather than as an instrument of economic democracy. They would concentrate, through a labor party, on restoring labor to its rightful place in the political sun—in contrast to democratic unionism, which would attempt to establish that place by putting the house of labor in order, and by establishing economic democracy with the aid but not the direction of government.

These three orientations do not represent sharply distinct groupings within the labor movement. They are, rather, tendencies with distinguishable lines that are frequently blurred. The philosophy of most union leaders would be a blend of these. George Meany, the president of the recently merged AFL-CIO, began his union career as a business unionist but today typifies democratic unionism. Walter Reuther started out dedicated to political unionism, but he has steadily been moving in the direction of democratic unionism. David

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McDonald, president of the United Steelworkers of America, a union with more than 1,000,000 members, has until recently made his home with democratic unionism, but he is now developing many of the domestic habits of business unionism. To date the purest examples of business unionism are to be found among the union leaders in the building trades, teamsters and coal miners. In general, more presidents of national unions represent the philosophy of business unionism while the leaders of national federations tend to reflect the point of view of democratic unionism. The position of political unionism is today the weakest of the competing philosophies.

Business unionism remains dominant and feeds upon its successes at the bargaining table and its power in municipal politics. The future of political unionism lies in capitalizing on failures—the failure to bring about world peace, to halt inflation, to forestall a depression, to give labor a share in increased productivity, and to prevent the government from favoring big business.

In the long run, the fate of political unionism is dependent upon the ability of democratic unionism to improve upon the legacy left the labor movement by Samuel Gompers. The most creative thinking and planning on the problems of automation, on the content of collective bargaining, and on new approaches to union-management cooperation, come from union leaders in the orbit of democratic unionism.

The new solidarity arising out of a merged AFL-CIO will enlarge the U. S. labor movement's influence upon national and world affairs, as it will also accelerate the competition among the rival philosophies to win the heart and mind of the labor movement. Of the triad, it is my opinion, only democratic unionism is equal to the task of simultaneously capturing the imagination of both manual and white collar workers, championing the rights of those Americans still victimized by economic and social injustice, and serving as an inspiration to trade unionists, not only in Europe, but especially in Asia and Africa.

PYRRHIC VICTORY

Elections in Japan

MURRAY POLNER

AMERICANS in Japan saw many strangely familiar sights during the recent elections. In the larger towns and cities most candidates drove about in motorcycle-propelled trucks soliciting votes from early morning until dusk. In one Osaka ward the local politician—in this case, a member of the Liberal-Democrats—even wore a coonskin hat, shook thousands of hands and appeared on television. No one took the trouble to deny the American origin of these stunts. In fact, the few kind words heard about the United States in the recent elections were expressly in favor of these imported gimmicks rather than more solemn influences. This is one of the lessons to be drawn from the recent elections to the Diet's upper House of Councilors. If the issues were sharply sketched they were also frequently interwoven with delicately submerged but emotionally-charged themes which tended to castigate American policies, threw Japan in a furor and left most of her basic problems unresolved.

The Liberal-Democrats, a union of eclectic and uninspired conservatives, were victorious although without their expected thumping majority. They won 122 seats, the same number they controlled in the last session. The Socialists, divided among themselves into left and right wings, nevertheless managed to capture nearly thirty-eight per cent of the vote. The Communists, their thunder stolen by the Socialist platform and an unofficial united front, nevertheless picked up their second seat. Most important of all, however, the results frustrated the conservative attempt to gain the two-thirds vote necessary to amend the national constitution and thus pave the way for a rearmed Japan.

Not long ago a prominent American, visiting Japan for the first time, publicly complimented the Chief Justice of the Japanese Supreme Court for writing so brilliant a document. Nobody, it seems, had bothered to tell the speaker what every Japanese schoolchild knows: that the present constitution is "foreign-made" and therefore wholly unacceptable. And no provision of the constitution stirs more debate than does the controversial "no-war" provision of Article 9. The conservatives have long wanted to amend this Article and push rearmament, with the result that their efforts splintered the Japanese electorate.

City people, especially the younger men and women, proved to be most adamant against rearmament and

Mr. Polner has recently returned from Japan, where he had been serving as a political analyst for the United States Government.

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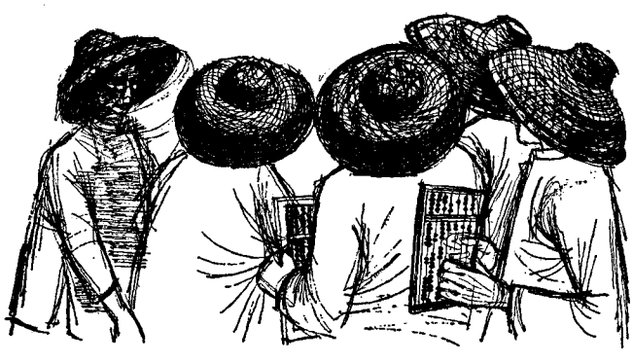
its inevitable concomitant, conscription. A different story was revealed in the countryside, where Japan's pressing agricultural difficulties lent support to the rebirth of a legal military force. What the elections did not clearly indicate was how far the Japanese are willing to go in changing their constitution. Even the Left Socialists, when their rigid views allow some maneuverability, say they favor some revision in what they sneeringly refer to as "MacArthur's Constitution," but what those changes would be nobody seems to know. Meanwhile, defeated for the time being, the conservative government quietly continues its questionably legal move to raise a new defense force in spite of the protestations of those who support Article 9.

IN ADDITION to rearmament, opposition to the constitution centers about a few common points. This includes reverting to some degree of national sovereignty, of restoring Hirohito to his titular role as "Head of State" and of increasing the centralized authority of the government. This is no simple regression to pre-war xenophobic nationalism, primarily because Japan's precarious political and economic position abroad wouldn't permit it and her leaders—many of whom are sincerely devoted to political democracy—do not want it. "To put it bluntly," an engineer with an American education said to me a few months ago, "we don't want an American constitution, or an American economy. We do want the GI's out, Okinawa returned and then we can be better, more equal friends."

The fact that sentiments such as these are so widespread throughout Japan helps to explain the significance of the unexpectedly large support which the Socialists won in the elections. Their main attraction and danger for Japan was the vociferous left wing, which measures events only with a myopic dual stand-



ard. They whipped up nationalist sentiment for Okinawa (and compelled the disinterested Liberal-Democrats to go along) and fittingly ignored Soviet Russia's occupation of Sakhalin, the Kuriles and Habomai, all more essential to Japan's livelihood. Moreover, throughout the campaign, their firebrands continued to strain the newly amalgamated Socialists by rejecting the connection between U.S. bases and Japanese defense which the right wing and the Government have thus far recognized.

Furthermore, last year's peasant strikes were engineered by the Communist-dominated General Council of Trade Unions (Sohyo), a close ally of the Left. And their protests against the use of an area close to sacred Mt. Fuji for a U.S. Army gunnery range conveniently ignored the very real grievances of the local farmers and the fact that Japan's Imperial Army had used the same area for the same purpose. Among the protesting farmers on that occasion were found such posters as "Stop U.S. Fascist A-Bomb Tests" and "Trade with Red China, Friendship with the Soviet Union."

There is little doubt that Japan's resentment at not being able to trade openly with Red China played a key role in the large Socialist turnout. Premier Hatoyama consistently compromised his own role by trying to be all things to all men. On different days he made flatly contradictory statements and he still speaks ambiguously of "two Chinas." This causes considerable consternation to those traders who support the Socialists because of tempting prospects of mainland business and those conservative businessmen who want no interference with their lucrative Taiwan trade. Add to them the Japanese voter who wanted Japan to take a more positive step in international politics and it can soon be seen that the Premier fumbled away his best campaign opportunities. He kept his Government on the path of equivocation and lost votes.

All this time hardly anybody pointed out that not only was the American embargo dampening trade possibilities but the Red Chinese were confounding it as well. Peiping wants Japan's heavy industrial goods, items found on the embargo list. Japan, in turn, covets Manchurian coal, iron ore and soy beans for which they will offer their customary consumer goods, none of which the Communists are keen on receiving. "Who needs or wants a fine camera in China today," questioned a veteran Chinese exporter in Yokohama, "when they can't afford film, can't obtain it if they could and are threatened with jail or worse if they took shots of restricted areas. Besides, they can't use cameras and the regular export junk to make jets or tanks. The Reds want the basic resources and until they get it, will not bargain seriously."

AGAINST this background, the conservative forces in government will have to make a move. It may be assumed that they will come to terms with the Soviets. At a more propitious time they will do the same with Peiping. The pressures for finding new export markets, especially as U.S. military spending goes down and trade competition abroad goes up, will certainly play a dominant part in the coming diplomatic

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shift. At home, to show they really can mean business, the economic squeeze will get a little tighter. Sooner or later, the sixty-five per cent gross income tax on resident foreigners, levied last year and temporarily deferred, will go into effect. Sooner or later, the conflict between capital and labor will become more intense, since many small and middle-sized employers—Liberal-Democratic to the core—banked on this election to help restore more paternalism and less governmental supervision in labor relations. They have always been embittered against the extraordinary advances made by trade unions under the aegis of the Occupation. Sooner or later, the quasi-official scheme to rid Japan of all U.S. forces by 1960 will be implemented and hailed as a day of great national rejoicing.

Meanwhile, the administration of old men (Premier Hatoyama and Mr. Shigemetsu are both past seventy) will move towards these changes as soberly as possible, moving heaven and earth to avoid offending either side in the cold war, but willing to goad one or the other for political gain. The feeling grows daily stronger that unless younger, more imaginative men appear in the ranks of the conservatives soon and help seek solutions to Japan's fundamental difficulties and her excessive unemployment and booming population, the Socialists will run Japan. Socialist spokesmen are now predicting that the time is not too distant when Japan will be governed by their party.

It would be simple to add up the results with the feeling that a pro-American party has once again been returned to power were it not that evidences of excessive nationalism and outright demagogy, visible before the campaign, do point to a pyrrhic victory. What happened was that a loyal but increasingly doubtful ally too eagerly blamed the United States for the multitude of ailments it was confronted with.

AN APPEAL

Rev. Gregory Feige, who founded a free vocational school for working class boys in Sao Paulo in 1945, seeks funds to complete greatly needed expansion. His present facilities in that Brazilian city's workers' district take care of two hundred boys but "many hundreds more would like to be admitted. With the completion of our new building, now under construction, we shall be able to take in about six hundred more, giving them a well-rounded basic education and technical training under religious auspices. However, to do this, we need more help than our working class population can give. Hence this appeal to our neighbors and Catholic friends in the North." Contributions for his Brazilian Children's Aid Fund may be sent directly to Father Feige at Rua Bartira 373, Sao Paulo, Brazil. (Airmail 10¢.)

THE SCREEN

ONE MAN IN HIS TIME

FOREIGN FILMS, even those not of the best, usually have some following in this country, and a couple of new releases, though not world-beaters, deserve attention. "The Doctors," produced by Paul Graetz in France and using a script by Maurice Auberge from the novel by André Soubiran, has an interesting plot about a very bright and very cynical medical student who finally learns when he starts practicing that the man is more important than the medicine—a theme covered rather perfunctorily in the American movie, "Not As a Stranger." The French film considers its subject more seriously, but, unfortunately, the first part covers such a welter of hospital detail that the viewer gets lost in the confusion of realistically shown operations (not for the squeamish) and debatable schools of medicine (not for the uninformed). Furthermore, because the chief character (expertly played by Raymond Pellegrin) is as cynical about sex as he is about patients (who interest him only to prove a medical point) he leaves the audience cold. When he fails to seduce a girl-student (Jeanne Moreau) who insists that love should have something more to it than physical attraction, he sulks like a spoiled brat, goes to the medical students' annual *Bal* and enters into the spirit of the orgy. Nothing looks sillier in the movies than a attempt to portray an orgy realistically and Director Ralph Habib goes to town on this one.

The last half of the film is entirely different and resembles in its somber earnestness "The Diary of a Country Priest." The young doctor goes to Auvergne to help an elderly doctor (Fernand Ledoux) whose former assistant (Robert Porte) failed to please the backward and superstitious peasants. Inspired by the wise, aged doctor, the young city-trained doctor, although at first disdainful of his ignorant patients, begins to know them and their needs. And, in understanding these country folk as people and not just cases, he begins to understand himself. As a film, "The Doctors" is uneven, but the last part, with its effectively-told story of a man's regeneration through his willingness to help a mean-spirited and almost unworthy people, is excellent.

ANOTHER IMPORT that turns out to be uneven is "Private's Progress," a British-made comedy that is frequently hilarious and occasionally dull. Since it's about a young Englishman who is "called up" in 1942 and dumbfounds the army, it will remind Americans of "See Here, Private Hargrove" and "No Time for Sergeants." Part of its charm is due to Ian Car-

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michael's disarming (the pun is intended) performance as a scholar who is better in the library than on training maneuvers. When he wakes up at camp one morning "feeling a little fragile," he presents one more enigma to the determined sergeant whose job it is to "turn a bunch of soft, sloppy civilians into tough soldiers." Everything this private does seems to astound his superiors, especially when, after fouling out of Officers' Candidate School, he becomes the protege of a Cockney private (Richard Attenborough) who is an authority on gold-bricking.

At times, "Private's Progress" is episodic and wanders off on tangents that are in themselves amusing —the satire on English Bohemians at a cocktail party or the caricature of our hero's uncle (Dennis Price), a scoundrel who loves money more than art and becomes head of Operation Hatrack, a project to rescue art treasures from the Germans who looted occupied countries, a project in which he is aided by our sad hero. Made by the Boulting Brothers (Roy as producer, John as director and as scriptwriter with Frank Harvey) who certainly know how to whip up a good movie, "Private's Progress" will have its enthusiasts in this country. However, even cinema-Anglophiles may find the ending somewhat bitter for such a bright and generally cheery comedy. Everyone, however, will be delighted with the film's ribbing of the opening lines that appear with most military service movies: "The producers gratefully acknowledge the official cooperation of absolutely nobody."

EXPLORER Lewis Cotlow, who shoots only with a camera, turns up with his third travel film, "Zanzabuku," which means "dangerous safari." Rightfully he acknowledges the assistance of government officials in Tanganyika, Uganda, Kenya and Belgian Congo where the expedition took place and the exciting picture was photographed. This time Cotlow is accompanying Carr Hartley, who catches and ships animals to zoos, and we are treated to amazing shots of giraffes, pythons, hyenas and other animals being captured. Cotlow gives a running commentary on the events as they happen, which adds to the excitement especially for armchair travelers who don't know how dangerous hippos are or why Pygmies build bridges. When a rhino attacks our jeep, however, no narration is necessary to alert us to the dangers. By frequently focusing his camera on Hartley's thirteen-year-old son, Cotlow is able to add more human interest to this story of a safari. One feels chastened when he sees the boy capture a leopard or assist in the handling of a slimy, repulsive python. In fact, all of "Zanzabuku" gives one a new respect, both for the animals in a zoo and for their captors—thanks to Lewis Cotlow.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

THE STAGE

PASSION AND SOCIETY

IN THE middle range of the Shakespearean canon is a darkly potent and most disquieting play, "Measure for Measure." Out of favor with earlier generations, its allure for the contemporary audience is illustrative of the dilemmas of our moral state: we respond to this supple and dialectical study of the equivocal relation of passion and society; its attempt to reconcile, within human experience, the claims of instinct and those of natural law meets with a quickened sympathy in our particular moment of spiritual division; sensibly, too, the play touches us—as Shakespearean drama inevitably does—with the poignancy of some intensely felt personal pressure which has moved the dramatist to the exploration of this specific web of human action.

The city of Vienna, you will recall, lies steaming and honeying in its sensual excesses; the prisons and brothels send their randy, poisoned breath densely through the streets, and bawds and pimps "pursue/like rats that ravin down their proper bane/a thirsty evil." The climate is one of lust, and all decorum has gone "quite athwart." The Duke of Vienna, dismayed at the license which unbridled liberty has bred, elects to withdraw for a space and delegate authority to his lieutenant Angelo, that moralist of "very snow-broth" blood: perhaps one excess will chasten another and restore harmony. Angelo's first act is to invoke the death penalty for Claudio, a young man who has gotten his fiance with child before their marriage; Claudio's sister, the virginal Isabella, is summoned from her convent to plead his cause. The lines of rhetorical debate for a moral melodrama which would have pleased Scribe or Sardou are rigidly drawn: the issues want only statement and resolution.

Directly, the center of the play shifts: once into a dimension of richness; the second time, slackly, into a facile and slippery mechanical intrigue. The scene suddenly expands to disclose a current of venery and venality running through the very fabric of society: Angelo, infected with power and the verminous air, now finds himself as hot for "the resolute acting of the blood" as once he had been for justice and continence; he presses Isabella to the imperiousness of his will and sharp appetite. She, whose virtue had been sweetly austere, on being tested lapses into a shrill and defensive chastity; in desperate fear of death, Claudio barters his honor by urging Isabella to yield to Angelo, so that he may yet enjoy "the sensible motion of the living body." And still, the stinking sewers of Vienna proliferate their constant issue of lust. Suddenly, at the moment of deepest commitment,

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Shakespeare seems to jettison his moral burden: one of those dragging comic deceits out of a lighter work moves in decisively to strangle the play's theme and personages, and, all passion diverted, we subside in a thin dribble of perfunctory good will.

I believe this to be a just account of the dramatic impact of "Measure for Measure." Some residue of passionate concern lies shapeless and incoherent at the bottom of this bitter comedy; it is not projected into expressive life. Perhaps, as Mr. Mark van Doren has remarked, it went against Shakespeare's grain to make comedy out of such matter; perhaps the acrid atmosphere of the drama obsessively colored his mind, denying it the independence of detached judgment. There is, about "Measure for Measure," an impression of moral fatigue and disgust which seems to rise from circumstances external to the play: one recalls Mr. Eliot's observation that "Hamlet . . . is full of some stuff that the writer could not drag to light, contemplate, or manipulate into art." Yet in his brilliantly demonstrated essay on "Measure for Measure" in *An Approach to Shakespeare,* Mr. Derek Traversi suggests that we are wrong to equate the play's 'failure' with this burking of a solution, as it were. "Measure for Measure," Mr. Traversi would have it, is not a thesis drama, but the elaboration of a "state of experience." Like all Shakespearean drama, it portrays a disharmony, records a strife, and then adumbrates a pattern of meaning in which the strife may be healed and harmony restored. This interpretation seems to me most suggestive, making aesthetically intelligible what might otherwise appear chaotic and wilful; I might add that it offers fruitful possibilities in the exploration of other Shakespearean plays. We see, then, the thematic center of "Measure for Measure" to lie in the necessary tension between passion and society: the first, in the name of human dignity, demanding fulfillment and autonomy; the second, in the name of human responsibility, imposing limitation and restraint. The unchecked indulgence of Vienna is at one pole of extremity; Angelo and Isabella—in their untested virtue and inexperience and self-deception—at another. The Duke alone may be sufficiently disinterested, sufficiently flexible of knowledge and will, to suggest a state of corrected experience; he is an exemplar of all those who explore, in that admirable phrase Mr. Lionel Trilling has used elsewhere, "the dangers of the moral life." Perhaps, however, because he is not an *adequate* or mastering exemplar—as is Prospero or one of the later tragic heroes—he may be the flawed cornerstone in this extraordinarily dense and complex structure.

To communicate fully this vision, it would require a mounting of "Measure for Measure" much more stringent, austere and morally passionate than has been given the work by the American Shakespeare Festival Theatre in this, its second season. Messrs. John Houseman and Jack Landau have given the production every value of "popular theater" including the poorer ones: thus the movement is brisk and vivid; many of the scenes pretty and skilfully wrought; the speaking of the difficult verse generally commonplace; and the atmosphere of the whole occasion full of an easy and somewhat complacent competence. No notable discernment is evident, no consistent projection of the drama's pattern. There are, however, several scalding lapses, and altogether a lamentable want of profound taste and some dark richness of tone. The producers have larkishly transposed the play's temporal situation to the Vienna of (roughly) Schnitzler and "La Ronde": not fatal, this, but damaging because it introduces a moral tone of cheeky, cynical smartness totally alien to the Hogarthian lechery and driving lust of "Measure for Measure." But of course, dear friends and gentle hearts, you know how we must have our nice bit of fun to distract us from all that boring Elizabethan verse, and what better than Mr. Rouben Ter-Arutunian's costumes: flounces and petticoats *à la* Toulouse-Lautrec; Astrakhan greatcoats and Tyrolean hats and Isabella floating around in a flossy convent nightie which ought to give pause to someone in Rome? Only Mr. Kent Smith as Angelo makes an austerely regal appearance in black with gold braid. Mr. Ter-Arutunian's permanent set—a lattice work of silver grey blinds—is bizarre, but supple and ingenious, and Miss Jean Rosenthal's lighting mesmerizes as usual. The incidental music by Mr. Virgil Thomson is gently witty.

This production of "Measure for Measure" is decidedly stylish, but if we take style to be, in Mr. Stark Young's phrase, "the significant relation between the thought and the outward, or visual, expression of it," then *style* is nowhere perceptible. There is no horror in the production; no sense, save in Mr. Smith's performance, that anything *costs*. The audience takes these issues of virtue as lightly as the characters; there is none of the brutish thrust of pure sensuality here, nor alternatively, that secret itch of power, egotism and will—the view of anything, even flesh or spirit, as a commodity, an object—which makes lust in the last analysis so truly intellectual. Lascivious wriggles, hooting and lewd glances are very second-rate stuff, and suggest only a melancholy state of arrested puberty. To be concise: the experience of the play has not been dramatically shaped; no point of view has been imposed, and all we participate in is a random exhibition of rather muddled "life."

Mr. Smith's Angelo sustains the production's claim to serious intent: though somewhat inflexible and constricted, it is thoughtful and intense, cleanly spoken and dominating in its psychological complexities. Miss Nina Foch, the Isabella, has a pleasing quality, though her performance, is indeterminate. Mr. Donald Harron, whose talent seems secure, is a touching Claudio; Mr.

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Arnold Moss a competent though fussy Duke, and the Escalus of Mr. Stanley Bell truly distinguished. The Lucio is Mr. Norman Lloyd, whose mincing and epicene humor is light years away from the ruttish bawdry with which Shakespeare invested the role. Mr. Lloyd, however, chooses to play the character as a kind of dirty old man leering on the Place Pigalle. At any moment, I expected him to say "Faugh!"

The theater at Stratford, Connecticut remains handsome beyond compare, though no one would miss the tatty interior draperies, or Mr. Walter Reade's Refreshery (Pepsi-Cola, Root Beer, 7Up—not to mention Assorted Nuts and various Elizabethan gimcracks —write YOUR blank verse with a feathered quill!) which smudges the elegant lines of the lobby. "Measure for Measure" is being presented in repertory with "King John" and "The Taming of the Shrew," upon which productions, I regret to say, I shall not report.

RICHARD HAYES.

COMMUNICATIONS

"WAGES AND PRICES"

San Antonio, Texas

TO the Editors: Father Schirber's first point on wages and salaries [Aug. 10] is that "a rise in wages made possible by a rise in the price of the product is, if not illusory, enjoyed at the expense of other workers." Grant that it is not illusory. Grant, too, that other workers pay in part. But it is paid also by non-workers who buy the product. Besides, the price need not always go up. Higher productivity and less money allotted to interest and dividends or to a firm for its own expansion or all of these together could pay for a wage increase.

His second point is that there need be no fear of a depression even if prices do not go down and wages do not go up. (Price cuts made possible by cheaper production are apparently ruled out by Father Schirber, as they are, largely, in practice because of the quite general collusion of business firms). For, the argument continues, buying is not only private consumers' buying, but also the buying of business expansion and of government, and the three together are making the country prosperous.

They have to a degree, overlooking bad spots and a few industries, farming included. But business expansion needs a private or governmental market, or both; otherwise it is foolish, and the business expansionists might as well build pyramids as factories—might better, for pyramids are more ornamental than factories and last longer. And if the cold war subsides, then the government as buyer subsides too. Or are we to look forward to a long, happy and prosperous cold war?

As for consumers' buying power being enough now, don't tell that to most of the farmers or to the millions of migratory farm workers, or to the millions more in service, white collar, and industrial work, who are not well enough organized or go unprotected by law, or both. They need more buying power. If it comes from price cuts due to increased productivity (although it will not) or to higher prices for other workers and for those who live off rent, interest, dividends and speculation, all well and good within limits.

Besides, their getting more money might relieve the producers of material commodities of some of the distasteful but profitable and necessary job of pursuing us, night and day, with all the arts of salesmanship and installment plan devices so that the rest of us will take the fabulous amount of civilian goods that they can now produce. That would be a welcome interlude. We might even have more money then for other things, like more education or the support of more people to pray for us or helping to develop the poor areas of the earth.

Father Schirber's conclusion is astounding. For he concludes that "a rapid and continued increase in productivity" is "the sole basis for steadily rising wages and economic welfare." Sole basis? That leaves out the quantity of debt in business and the interest rate, dividends, profit-sharing, a wide distribution of ownership, prices (largely a businessmen's cruel conspiracy now) and how an expansion of production is paid for.

It leaves out current economic theory. It is a throwback to the 19th and early 20th century economic theory and practice, which blew up in 1929. Increase in productive capacity was then held to be the key, and it was maintained that everything must be directed towards it and that everything good follows from it, including the automatic sale and use of the product.

The "sole basis" idea leaves out Catholic social teaching of every period, the 19th and early 20th centuries as well as now included. Specifically, twenty-five years ago, when an enormous under-use of an enormous productive power was revealing again the inner crisis of our unjust civilization, Pius XII's Encyclical on Social Order said that unless a "social and juridical order" watches over productive effort, it will not produce fully, and that, what is still more important, justice and social justice are needed also in ownership and incomes (and must be deliberately aimed at by economic organization, government and morality) to get the full output and a good standard of living for everyone.

But there is no need of quoting authorities. A bigger apple is good; but how it is cut and divided is important. So, too, is the question of who cuts it. It does not justly divide and distribute itself automatically; and if an apple, big or little, is not used, why grow it?

(REV.) R. A. MCGOWAN.

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POZNAN RIOTS

Plattsmouth, Neb.

TO the Editors: I should like to amplify several comments made in your editorial on the Poznan riots, "Workers and the *Daily Worker*" [July 13]. The action of the Poles at Poznan was really no surprise. Anyone familiar with the Polish character or with Polish history knew that the Polish people would not remain forever bent under the whip of their Communist masters—knew, in fact, that they would give evidence as soon as possible of what was really in their hearts. The Pole is no slave. The genius, the culture, the energy of the Poles throughout their long history has shown their appreciation of democracy, freedom, the dignity and worth of man, and their love of and devotion to God and His church. Loyalty to the Catholic Church is as much a characteristic of the staunch Pole as is loyalty to his nation, as the history of Poland demonstrates.

These qualities of the Poles cannot forever be crushed under the heel of the oppressor. The Pole may be volatile, vivacious, at times thoughtless, at times sensuous in his poetic search for beauty. But he is also capable of severe, fatiguing and prolonged labor, of endless devotion and self-sacrifice for an ideal. He worships independence to the point of obsession, and freedom to the point of seeming insanity. And now when he has lost both independence and freedom, the Pole remains faithful to his age-old love. Thus the Pole will not down. His aspirations must necessarily burst forth into action. So the uprising in Poznan was inevitable.

Just what did the Poles have in mind in staging the Poznan uprising? Surely they did not expect, with one act of valor, to throw off the yoke of Communism. Surely they did not think their few, untrained, unarmed numbers could cope with the might of their oppressors, nor were they naive enough to think the rest of the world would arise in sympathy and help them attain freedom and bread. They were aware that the sacrifice of life and limb and the imprisonment of many would be demanded as the price of their valor. And yet, they did rise. "What was their purpose?" we are forced to ask.

Many motives could have prompted their action. In keeping with their basic psychology, I think a primary purpose of the revolt was to show the world that the old Polish spirit of freedom was not dead. Consider the fact that at the time of the uprising a much-advertised national trades exposition was going on at Poznan. Many visitors from all over the world were present. Among these were press representatives, technicians, educated and intelligent people from everywhere. Here was an opportunity seldom equaled to tell the world what the Poles really thought and felt about the satellite government and an opportunity to cry out against their physical poverty and spiritual bondage. With thousands of foreigners in the city observing what was happening, the Poles undoubtedly thought also that there would be less likelihood of bloody reprisals and repercussions than there would be at any other time.

Besides these motives, the Poles knew that every effort, no matter how small, must add up to the sum total of improvement of their lot. The Poznan incident was not a single, isolated act or first occurrence. It has been acknowledged recently that the Polish underground in the last few years has liquidated some 35,000 Communists or their sympathizers. The Poznan effort was a continuation of the fight against a foreign aggressor on their soil. The Poles remembered, too, that after a similar uprising a few years ago in East Berlin, the satellite government of East Germany was forced to ease the conditions of the masses. Was it too much to hope that they too would find some little relief from the pangs of hunger and spiritual degradation? Finally, the "new line" of Moscow, disclaiming the brutality and tyranny of Stalin and proclaiming a new era of greater freedom for the individual, may have prompted the Poles to test the sincerity of the Red claims. All these are possible motives for the Poznan revolt of last June.

But the most important question is: after Poznan, what? Will America, will the United Nations, will the the world simply nod its head and say, "Oh, those brave, noble, idealistic, foolish Poles"? Will world opinion continue blind to the terrible injustice that has been done the Polish people since the outbreak of hostilities in 1939? Will the unbelievable apathy of our government continue to give comfort to the enemies of human liberty and true peace, while men of good will die because there is no one to raise a hand in their aid?

Poznan, then, is a symbol of the will of the Polish people to be free. Poznan, like East Berlin of a few years ago, was an opportunity for free men everywhere to voice their applause of self-sacrificing heroism, to make known their continued hatred of tyranny, to pledge themselves to undiminished effort to aid those who strive to purchase freedom even at the price of their blood. Above all, it was a cry against the bondage of its spiritual captivity. And so, the spiritual forces of all men of good will should be mustered with renewed vigor and strength, with renewed devotion and sacrifice, to storm the very gates of heaven for help. For other sources seem to have failed. May He who also suffered injustice be moved to hear our plea, and the prayers of Our Lady of Czenstochowa, the mighty defender of the Polish people.

RT. REV. MSGR. JOSEPH PRZUDZIK.

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Frank, Lucid Appraisal of Controversial F. D. R.

ROOSEVELT: THE LION AND THE FOX. By James MacGregor Burns. Harcourt, Brace. $5.75.

By MICHAEL HARRINGTON

IT IS over a decade since Franklin Roosevelt died, yet we have not yet reached that point where we can place him in true historical perspective. His name is still a battle cry on the lips of the New Deal candidates of the Democratic Party; it is still a curse to thousands, even millions, of Republicans. James Burns' new book will probably occasion more partisan controversy than scholarly discussion, and this is unfair to the author. For he has written a calm and objective study of considerable worth. His personal sympathies (liberal) are very much in evidence, yet he is remarkably frank about his subject.

One of the main points of Burns' treatment has been stated before, notably by Richard Hofstadter in his *American Political Tradition:* that Roosevelt was an "opportunist" in the sense that he never developed a personal political program, failing even to understand many of the crucial aspects of the New Deal movements which he led. On this score, Burns' treatment is far more detailed than that of Hofstadter. Here is Roosevelt at the end of his first term unconcerned about the Wagner Act, even flippant about the labor movement in general; or Roosevelt during the recession of 1937 not understanding a brilliant letter from Keynes.

But this is not Mr. Burns' main focus. The point which he concentrates upon is related to these failures, but beyond them. It is the question of Roosevelt as a political leader. And part of Burns' emphasis comes down heavily upon the role that a lack of coherent understanding played in Roosevelt's leadership. That, however, doesn't exhaust the problem. It is a paradox that the most loved and most hated political figure of his time, a man who could command an almost mystical following, is seen as deficient in fundamental qualities of leadership.

The issue of Party realignment will serve as an example. Roosevelt presided over a Democratic Party which was every bit as divided as it is today. By 1938, its right wing had more or less gone into a coalition with the Republicans to block liberal legislation. Clearly enough, political realignment was a necessity if the New Deal was to continue as a force after the wild moments of the First Hundred Days. Roosevelt himself was to realize the point too late when he contacted Wilkie about forming a new liberal party.

Yet Roosevelt failed utterly to create a liberal organization. He had the personal popularity, the social movement, but he did not take leadership. Why? For Mr. Burns, part of the answer is in the lack of any kind of a systematic ideology. But he takes the point farther than that. During his first term, Roosevelt acted as a balance, now turning right (promising to balance the budget), now left (finally endorsing the Wagner Act), playing factions and personalities, and attracting a huge national majority to his own magnetic individuality.

After the great victory of 1936, the factors which allowed such an approach to be successful disappeared. There was the recession of 1937. There was the growing hostility of the business community. There was the attack of John L. Lewis from the left. The fabulous Roosevelt coalition began to disappear. And on an issue as crucial as that of foreign policy, the great debate of isolationism against interventionism, the leader did not lead. There was no question of his personal sympathy, or of his private, even his executive, acts. But he did not take the issue to the public.

In the intervening years, the country has grown much more conservative. A reviewer in the New York *Times,* for example, took Burns to task for placing so much emphasis on Roosevelt's organizational failure. The inanities of the present party system are justified in the name of a "pragmatism" which is favorably contrasted to the "dogmatism" of ideological, European politics. And, to be sure, such ideological politics can be paralyzing, as in the case of France. Yet there is a point where pragmatism becomes the rankest opportunism and party structure irrational. That is the case today, I think, when the major parties are electoral coalitions unifying contradictions.

Roosevelt, as Burns points out, failed to meet this problem. The first six years of the New Deal (or rather, the New Deal, for it can only be said to have lasted for six years) were a period of hodge-podge legislation, failing to solve the fundamental economic crisis of the times. And by the end of those six years, the New Deal was over, there was no liberal organization nationally, and Roosevelt was unable to lead on the most pressing issue, that of peace and war.

My own review is a confirmation of my opening paragraph: that it is impossible to speak about Roosevelt without passion. But this shouldn't be allowed to obscure the excellence of this new study. Mr. Burns has done a careful, scholarly job; he writes well; and if he is too early for that definitive, many volumed summation of a fascinating man, he has nevertheless given us as calm and lucid a study as one could hope for. I don't share his politics, but I do share his fascination with the paradoxical giant who is the subject of his biography.

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History in the Service of Popular Art

O BEULAH LAND. By Mary Lee Settle. Viking. $3.95.

By DEXTER ALLEN

TWO HUNDRED odd years ago the British general Edward Braddock attacked the French at Fort Duquesne. Several minutes before the battle, the confident old general lifted a crystal glass: "Gentlemen, the King." His lieutenants, among whom was the already well-known Major Washington, answered the toast. Beyond them the 'greatest convoy since Caesar' had hesitated, anxious to engage the French and end the monotony of the last weeks. A scout approached Braddock's table, and one of the aides rose to intercept him. A small force of certainly not more than two hundred had been sighted, and action was in the offing.

The general himself rose casually to his feet a moment later: " 'The *avant garde* will clear the road, and we'—he turned away from them—'will proceed quietly to our places.' " By nightfall the British had suffered their first disaster in the New World. Most of the greatest convoy since Caesar was destroyed; and the dying general could only mutter again and again to himself "Who would have thought it?"

This incident is the actual beginning of Miss Settle's novel on the pre-revolution colony of Virginia, the fixed point about which the action revolves. The book opens sometime after the debacle, and the subsequent massacre carried out by the Indian followers of the French. The first character to appear is Hannah, who has escaped her savage captors and fled into the wilderness of the Endless Mountains—which are now the Alleghenies. The next time shift devolves to an earlier episode in Hannah's life. She is a thieving waif in the slums of mid-eighteenth century London. In sequence now we follow her to the colonies of the New World, join the expedition against the French, and watch General Braddock's crushing defeat.

Eventually enough characters to provide a proper denouement converge on an exceptionally beautiful valley beyond the Endless Mountains. Beulah (where, incidentally, the Indian squaws also come in time of war to boil brine) is the promised land; and in this setting Miss Settle collects all the budding American stereotypes. Everyone is quite vigorous; the differences are chiefly of intent. Perhaps the most important character is Jeremiah, an escaped bondsman from the colonies who finds amazing spiritual and physical freedom in the Virginia wilderness. He is the weakest and most convincing by turns.

In the opening section Jeremiah is a non-dimensional, twenty-five-year-old man: a religious fanatic, an intractable bore. One is startled to discover the refugee, without personality transition, wandering out through the snow beyond his log cabin to play with himself. He has conceived, quite normally for a hitherto isolated and lonely youth,

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APPROACH TO POLITICS, IV

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"It is not fair to say that self-interest is the only motive in business or the professions, but the evidence is strong that it is the predominant consideration. In any case, the opportunist, the sharp dealer, is not despised by the business world. Often, if he avoids conviction, he sits at the head of the table. The high pressure artist, the dealer in influence, expanding doubt or contracting truth, as the case demands, all disciples of Hermes, sit at the right hand.

"Business, and more recently, some of the professions, rally to the cry 'Free Enterprise.' Of course, like any popular slogan, this means many things to many people. But fundamentally it comprehends a rejection of social responsibility and of social justice. It leaves no room for the concept of distributive justice or the traditional idea of legal justice, and very little room for commutative justice. Legality becomes the watchword."

Representative Eugene J. McCarthy (Minn.)
on Morality in Government
in The Commonweal
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a desperate passion for a 'pore leetle lean thing' of a girl who has escaped the Indian massacre and after unbelievable anguish finds herself in his secluded valley. Hannah has been cleansed of her guilt by her journey through the mountain wastes—where she kills squirrels with her hands and consumes them raw—and arrives half-dead to comfort him.

Jeremiah is eventually driven by his frustration into the winter fields, and his act, out of keeping with the context, is both startling and antagonizing. Miss Settle, leaving the true dimension of Jeremiah's personality to us, has given the wrong signposts. Out of his subsequent, anticlimactic union with Hannah, however, comes a more consistent character: their son Ezekiel.

Ezekiel is sketchily drawn, but the most sympathetic personage in the novel. He falls in love with the girl whose father holds grant to the valley, gives Sara a child, and is thereupon allowed to marry her. Sara's father, who had been one of Braddock's captains, is the apparent central-character, the understanding gentleman who forges unity among the settlers. He understands the love between Ezekiel and Sara; but his wife, a familiar archetype of the Southern writers, can not contain herself at this ultimate disgrace—finds the ceremony unendurable, and unconvincingly regresses into some sort of child state.

In conclusion, the Indians descend in force on the valley of Beulah. No one in particular is slaughtered but old Jeremiah and Hannah. With an obvious drawing together of symbols (such as a tomahawk, a riding crop for gentility, a ruby pebble) the book reaches its end.

Miss Settle's transitions are at best awkward, at times quite confusing. She is undoubtedly at her best when her technique is sufficiently run-of-the-mill to pass unnoticed. She is a writer whose capabilities lie in the field of popular art —who only defeats herself by affecting the attitudes, without the insights, of serious expression. The opening passages of *O Beulah Land* are painfully amateurish in

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their attempted impressionism, without the banal interest of a Frank Yerby, or the pleasure in balances of a Virginia Woolf. These seem to constitute the two basic influences on her style.

One has the sense Miss Settle is trying desperately to view that tragic footprint on the first page with both a Hollywood camera's perspective and a poet's sensibility. The mood is difficult, unless one has so calloused an ear that it is enough for ideals to occur merely in sequence on a page to fit together. In the area of common dialogue, however, the writer can be really superb. Particularly in moments given to Jeremiah, and to his son Ezekiel, the sense of reality and pathos is genuine and beautiful.

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Rare Maturity

MADAME SOLARIO. Viking. $3.95.

By WILLIAM PFAFF

HERE is a memorable and remarkable book. The first remarkable thing about it is that it is anonymous. A desire for anonymity is not a characteristic common among novelists. Then it is an accomplished book, superb in style and construction, blending the grace of its time and place and people with a story that begins lightly and ends in a most powerful and sinister manner. The place is a resort on Lake Como. It is 1906. The cast is aristocratic or rich; the principals are Madame Solario, of Scandinavian and English descent, educated in the United States and France; her brother; a Russian soldier and nobleman; and a young Englishman. The peculiar relationship between brother and sister is founded on personal catastrophe and ends in a catastrophe. The Russian and the Englishman are implacably involved.

But it begins with charm. Flirtation and the casual beauty of a society that ended in 1917. The shadows are seen among the flowers only when the book is half done. But the shadows engulf all, and the final scenes are a somber and brilliant performance.

The book has a rare sureness and maturity, yet it also has a curious amateur quality. It seems indeed to have been written by one of its own characters. This kind of classic amateurism is appropriate to that rich but small and finished world.

REVIEWERS

Michael Harrington contributes frequently to various political and cultural magazines.

Dexter Allen is a novelist now living in New York.

William Pfaff is a member of the news staff of the American Broadcasting Company.

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